

RainScapes Rewards

Rain Garden Establishment Guidance



Congratulations on installing your new rain garden! You've taken the first step in managing stormwater runoff. Follow this guidance to take the next steps in keeping your rain garden looking good and working optimally.

During the first two to three years, it is especially important to follow a regular maintenance schedule. A well-designed rain garden will need minimal care once established.

Annually, you will want to check the condition of your berm, inlets and overflows to make sure that these structural components of your garden are intact and unclogged.

Don't forget to apply for your Water Quality Protection Charge credit! See details on back.

Know Your Plants

- Take photos after the plants are first installed and label plants to help with plant identification.
- Learn which plants are supposed to be there and which aren't.

Weed Early and Often

- Pull weeds regularly by their roots to keep them from spreading. Remove weeds before they go to seed.
- Never use herbicides or pesticides in the rain garden.
- Plan for seasonal weeding. Winter weeds appear from winter into early spring; summer weeds appear mid-summer to early fall.
- Get to know what your local invasive plants look like. Refer to: [Montgomery County Invasives of Concern](#).

Replenish Mulch

- A newly planted rain garden has 3 inches of mulch. Check the mulch depth and loosen it every spring and fall, and always check the existing depth of mulch before adding more. Less mulch will be needed over time as plants fill in.
- Do not pile mulch on plant stems.
- Maintain the 6" ponding depth from the top of the mulch to the overflow point.

Care for Your Plants

- To work properly, rain gardens should have dense plant coverage at the bottom.
- If plants die, determine why. Replace with others that will be more successful.
- Cut back ornamental grasses and perennials and remove fallen leaves in late winter. Consult the [Resources](#) page of the [RainScapes website](#) for helpful plant information.
- Periodically thin shrub stems to shape and encourage fuller growth.
- Some perennials may require dividing every three years to maintain size and promote vigor. Water well after dividing.

QUESTIONS? Call 311 / Email RainScapes@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov / Visit RainScapes.org

Keep the Water Moving: Maintain Inlets and Exits

- Check the inflow area to make sure there are no blockages.
- Remove fallen leaves, and trim plants that block water flow.
- Check the berm for erosion. Repair and stabilize.
- Remove sediment that has accumulated on the cobble. Determine the source, and stabilize that area to prevent sediment from entering the rain garden..

Water Your Garden

- When first planted, and during the first week after installation, water plants every day or every other day. For the next 2 weeks, water every other day. For the next 6 weeks, water 2-3 times per week.
- For the first summer, water once or twice a week depending on how dry it is.
- For the second summer, water once every 2 weeks depending upon how dry it is.
- By the third summer, plants should need no more watering unless there's more than 3 weeks of drought.

Address Storm Damage

- Check the garden inlet and exit areas for erosion or debris.
- Carefully clear large amounts of snow that might restrict the inflow or overflow of water of the rain garden. Do not pile snow in the garden.
- After the snow has melted, remove large branches or other debris.
- After a large rainstorm, rake mulch back into place and reposition cobble that has moved around, as needed.

Establishment Phase Monthly Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Structural Monitoring (Inlets & Outlets)			x	x				x	x	x	x	
Pruning		x	x	x								
Cutting Back Perennials		x	x									
Watering					x	x	x	x	x	x		
Edging					x			x				
Weeding	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Mulching				x								
Leaf Removal			x									x
Winter Weed Removal		x	x									

APPLY FOR YOUR WATER QUALITY PROTECTION CHARGE CREDIT!

For property owners like you who are managing stormwater runoff and properly maintaining your projects, this annual credit on your property tax bill is a win-win for you and the County. You save on your tax bill and it helps the County meet local and State stormwater management requirements.



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Visit MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/water/WQPC
to learn more and apply!



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